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POLITICAL SCIENCE

HOAR, ROGER SHERMAN. *Constitutional Conventions: Their Nature, Powers and Limitations*. Pp. xvi, 240. Price, \$2.00. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1917.

This book was very much needed, and Mr. Hoar has performed a distinct public service in bringing it out at this time. We appear to be in a period of constitutional change in our states. Steps were taken in at least ten states at the last sessions of the legislatures to provide for constitutional conventions, and active movements are in progress in several other states. But, despite the direct and concrete interest in *Constitutional Conventions: Their Powers and Limitations*, there is no treatise to which one can turn which brings the law of the subject down to date. The great work of Judge Jameson, which is the main authority on the subject, was published in 1867 and revised slightly in 1887. Much water has passed over the mill since that time. Dodds' book, *The Revision and Amendment of State Constitutions*, helped considerably to supply the deficiency, but that book is historical rather than legal.

The timeliness of Mr. Hoar's book cannot be better illustrated than by the fact that it was scarcely off the press when it was quoted by both the majority and dissenting opinions of the Indiana Supreme Court in passing upon the constitutionality of the Convention Act of 1917.

The book is divided into eighteen chapters, and in all cases the legal principles are briefly and concisely stated. It is an easy book to consult, and even the layman will find it of great interest if he happens to be at all concerned with the problems of constitution making. The chapter headings indicate the scope of the book: The Origin of Conventions, Fundamental Principles, Analysis of Questions, Popular Conventions are Legal, Who Calls the Convention, Legislatures as Conventions, Executive Intervention, The Convention Act not Amendable, Legislative Control, Popular Control, Extraordinary Powers Claimed, Judicial Intervention, Does the Constitution Apply, Internal Procedure, Status of Delegates, Submission of Amendments, The Doctrine of Acquiescence, Conclusions.

Particular reference should be made to the last chapter containing the conclusions of the author. These conclusions are boiled down to the minimum of statement, and the summary contained in the chapter is invaluable. The volume gives evidence of a tremendous amount of expert work. The author has made a first-hand examination of the cases and has not relied upon the interpretations of other authors. He has, moreover, proceeded without any set convictions, such as beset Jameson. His sole inquiry has been to determine what the legal status is, rather than what it should be. We may disagree with the conclusions of the courts, but we can hardly disagree with the conclusions of the author regarding the conclusions of the courts. If, as it appears, we are to have a reorganization of our state constitutions, this book will grow in importance.

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